Extra support from your energy supplier during Coronavirus

citizens advice

The government, the energy regulator and Citizens Advice have collaborated on an industry agreement signed by all UK household energy suppliers to give consumers additional protections during the COVID-19 pandemic, which came into force in March and remain in place.

Identifying and prioritising customers at risk.

Suppliers should seek to identify and prioritise customers who may need additional support and consider the needs of customers taking into account that:

- Any customer can suddenly become vulnerable even if they are not classed as such already
- Priority Service Register customers may need extra advice and support
- Prepayment meter customers, both smart and legacy will need specific support
- Customers with health conditions or who are or are vulnerable to a cold home, may need to maintain a constant supply of energy

Suppliers will support customers who are impacted financially as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19. Based on individual circumstances, this could include:

- Suppliers should consider reassessing, reducing or pausing debt repayment and bill payments for domestic customers in financial distress.
- Suppliers should consider referring customers who are struggling to pay to third party debt advisers such as StepChange and Citizens Advice.
- Suppliers will suspend credit meter disconnections

Suppliers will support prepayment meter customers directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 to stay on supply. Based on individual circumstances, this could include:

- extending discretionary/ friendly credit or sending out a pre-loaded top up card.
- enabling customers to nominate a trusted third party to be able to pick up discretionary credit sent to a shop on their behalf.
- switching smart prepayment meters into credit mode or extending non-disconnection periods (consumers will be made aware any credit will need to be paid back).
- promoting online smart prepayment top-up channels.
- having particular regard to the existing rules and the potential impact of COVID-19 when considering switching a customer from credit to prepay.
- contacting prepayment customers with advice on what to do in the event of self-isolation

Help from Citizens Advice

If after contacting your supplier you need further help, use the Citizens Advice consumer helpline

- Telephone: **0808 223 1133** — Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
  Textphone: **18001 0808 223 1133**
- For a Welsh-speaking adviser: **0808 223 1144**
  Textphone for a Welsh-speaking adviser: **18001 0808 223 1144**

If you need more support if you feel overwhelmed, or are unable to deal with your supplier on your own because of personal circumstances, the Citizens Advice Helpline may also be able to refer you to their Extra Help Unit.
Learn more at: **https://ehu.org.uk**